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ceived indemnity from her husband in a certain number (heads) of cows, in the same amount and way as the widow returning to her parents' home after her husband's death. For each year of her married life, the husband was required to give her one cow, excepting the first year which was not taken into account; so that for ten years of married life the divorced wife received nine cows; for five years, four cows, etc. The first year was not counted because most of this time was passed by the woman at the home of her parents, according to the customs of marriage.

Such cases of divorce as those just stated, where more than one wife could be present in the family, are responsible for the erroneous opinions expressed by some investigators[8] who wrote about the practice of polygamy among the Georgian Highlanders. This error has been noticed by Dr. G. Radde, who brought this question into discussion in his German work, "Die Chewsuren und ihr Land."[9] and disputed the presence of polygamy among the Khevsurs.

Besides woman's sterility and the bearing of only female children, the Georgian Highlanders permitted divorce on the ground of personal dislike between husband and wife, where the husband drove out his wife whom he did not like, or the wife deserted her spouse when she could not get along with him. When the husband put away his wife, he was required—according to the custom of the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes, as we have mentioned—to pay a fixed amount of indemnity, called *samtsunebro*. But when the divorce was initiated by a woman, her parents were required to pay the deserted husband eighty rubles or its equivalent in nature; otherwise she had no right to marry again. The payment of this indemnity, which was usually made with cows, sheep, domestic utensils, etc., made a woman legally free to venture upon a second marriage.

Among the Svans, when a married couple parted with the mutual privilege of concluding a new marriage, such a divorce was called *litsevra*. And when a husband was the initiator of the divorce and his wife was not guilty, he was requested to return the

[8] Eristov: 112-113.
[9] Radde: d, 98-90.

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dowry of the woman and in addition to pay an indemnity to her relatives, which usually was equal to half the amount of the blood price, called *tsor* by the Svans. This custom of the Svans is similar to the old law of King George V of Georgia, which is included in the Georgian Code of King Vakhtang VI, the law dealing with "Wife Desertion," which reads: "He who deserts his wife without cause, and it shall appear that though she was not at fault in anything yet he has separated from her innocent, shall pay half *wergild* according to her rank."[10] But in case a Svan woman deserted her husband of her own will, then her relatives paid him the same amount of indemnity, the half of *tsor,* and returned the bride-price (*nachvlash*) to him.[11]

The other motive of divorce among the Georgian Highlanders was the breach of conjugal fidelity—adultery committed by a woman, which was not only punishable with divorce, but was also regarded as a serious crime. In past times, the Tushes,[12] Pshavs,[13] and Khevsurs[14] mutilated the adulterous wife and in such a state sent her back to her parents. The mutilation consisted in ripping the woman's cheeks, or cutting off her nose, ears, and even her hands. Thus, for example, Dr. G. Radde tells of a woman being mutilated in such a way who was living in the village of Blo when he visited Khevsuria. "Untreue der Frau," writes Dr. Radde,[15] "wurde frueher durch Ohren—und Nasen—Abschneiden bestraft. Im Dorfe Blo kann man jetzt noch eine in dieser Weise verstummelte Frau sehen, auch das Wangenzerschneiden is ueblich fuer diese Suende."

But there was also a custom among the Khevsurs,[16] when the offended husband was unwilling to punish his guilty wife by mutilating her, he sent her home to her parents and prohibited her for a certain length of time from marrying again. This prohibition was called *ivstila.*

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[10] Wardrop: 619.
[11] Kovalevsky: a, II, 50-51.
[12] Khakhanov: a, 52.
[13] Khizanashvili: 131.
[14] Radde: d, 90.
[15] Radde: *ibid.*
[16] Zisserman: 250.

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The Svans did not follow the practice of the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes in punishing an adulterous wife by mutilation. On the contrary, the husband was responsible to his wife's kinsmen for any abuse which she might suffer. The offended Svan husband had the right to send his guilty wife away and recover from her relatives the bride-price (*nachvlash*) paid by him, with an additional indemnity for his dishonor which was equal to half of the blood-price (*tsor*).[17]

[17] Kovalevsky: a, II, 37, 50.

POSITION OF WOMEN

C. G. 562 The position of women in the Caucasus was in many respects subordinate to that of men: male children were preferred, descent was patrilineal, residence patrilocal, women were excluded from inheritance rights; in case the headwoman was unable to reconcile a quarrel among the female members of the family, the case was put before the headman; divorces were in general more easily obtained by men than by women, and in the case of adultery the husband had the right to kill or disfigure his wife. The Circassian code of behavior forbade women to sit down while men were standing, and the husband was addressed in terms of respect by his wife. In most areas the women led a life of hard work; besides doing the housework, they also assisted in the work in the field, though certain activities such as tending horses and in most cases ploughing were performed by men only. Among the Georgian mountaineers, women were regarded from a religious point of view as unclean, and were forbidden to enter the walled precincts of the sanctuaries; the Svan had sexual avoidance rules to ensure success in hunting expeditions; in Mingrelia a woman may not kill a chicken or animal she is going to prepare, as this would spoil the food.

C G [684]

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